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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

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SMASH RACIST DEPORTATIONS— WORKERS HAVE NO NATIONS!

CHICAGO, JULY 13—Thousands of workers poured into downtown Chicago this weekend to protest against the racist attacks on undocumented workers. This multiracial, multi-gendered and multi-generational crowd showed the power of a united working class. As a youth marching with our Progressive Labor Party (PLP) contingent said, "If we don't get it, shut it down!"

As in: a revolution, where we replace capitalism with an egalitarian communist world run by the working class. We led anti-racist, anti-sexist chants and even got many protesters to abandon the slogan "close those camps" and start chanting "smash those camps."Closing them isn't enough; we have to destroy them along with the borders the bosses use to justify creating them.

This protest showed working class anger and will to fight back especially when we passed a city jail in the middle of downtown that is believed to detain undocumented workers. We paused there, chanting and showing solidarity with workers we could visibly see at the top of the building, but it isn't enough.

Six days later, ICE, in collaboration with Homeland Security and the TSA, detained three children ages 9, 10 and 13 at O'Hare International Airport in an attempt to lure their parents into picking them up and being arrested. All three children were born in the United States, but their parents are undocumented (Chicago Tribune 7/19).

Until the working class holds state power, the ruling class will continue to terrorize and brutalize us. Whether it's ICE raids or "stop and frisk", we have to beat back the bosses' attacks, as we build a revolutionary movement for communism.

Bosses go on the attack

Trump's threat of deportation raids against immigrant workers and their families, kicking off his 2020 re-election campaign, is just the latest attack caused by this racist, declining, capitalist system. There has already been an increase of immigrants being detained by ICE. In early June, there had been approximately 52,500 immigrants detained in more than 200 detention centers. Families have continued to be split up and forced to live in torturous conditions.

Hundreds of migrants are being forced to take more dangerous routes across the U.S. border since there is a bottleneck at the ports of entry where workers wait for an asylum interview. And the conditions on the Mexican side are becoming unbearable because of extortions and kidnappings. As a result, hundreds are dying in the desert, in the rivers and in the extreme heat. Instead of trying to help or rescue these workers, the bosses' government has been harshly prosecuting people who leave water and other supplies for these immigrant workers!

Two brands of fascism: overtly racist or liberal veneer

As they attack immigrants, the U.S. bosses are deeply divided because their international rivals, mainly China and Russia, have been challenging and competing with them for more markets and resources. Trump does the bidding of the more domestically oriented bosses who are content with a smaller, less expensive, predominantly white military trained as racist killers. But the dominant finance capital bosses, who have a world empire to control, understand that they need a "multicultural" army for World War III. These bosses see immigrants as invaluable cannon fodder in the bigger wars to come.

Under Trump, the attack on immigrant workers has shifted and intensified, but history shows that the working class can't trust the Democratic Party to defend and protect immigrant workers. Last fiscal year, U.S. Enforcement and Removal Operations deported more than 250,000 undocumented immigrants. But, under President Barack Obama, the "Deporter in chief," the annual number of deportations peaked in 2012 at about 410,000 (New York Times, 6/18).

Working people have no nation

As internationalists, communists welcome immigrants as fellow workers who are fighters against capitalist brutality and exploitation. We are encouraged by the growing movement in Chicago to defend and protect our immigrant sisters and brothers from the ravages of these bosses' attacks. Workers have struggled against loopholes in the Sanctuary City laws, the racist gang databases, orders of deportation against countless immigrants and their families, and against the holding of children separated from their parents.

But the biggest lesson workers must learn is that we will be stuck in the endless struggle for reforms as long as we rely on billionaire politicians, like the governor of Illinois J.B Pritzker, for protection and relief. We must destroy the capitalists' state power and replace it with working class power. The Progressive Labor Party calls on all workers to defend our immigrant fellow workers against deportations and murder in concentration camps and along the border. Smash capitalism! Fight for communism! ✪

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OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Sudan caught in imperialist crossfire

After months of mass demonstrations against a military coup and crackdown that killed over 100 protesters in June, Sudan's governing generals, the Transitional Military Council (TMC), are negotiating a power-sharing agreement with liberal capitalists in the political opposition, the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC). But the main contradiction in Sudan, the tension that generated the current crisis, is the same one shaping events around the world: inter-imperialist rivalry between a rising China and a declining U.S. as they head toward the next world war.

Sudan is a gateway into Africa from the Middle East. The country's current instability is an opening for the U.S. main-wing finance capitalists to reassert their power in the Horn of Africa and the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial trade route and potential choke point between the Persian Gulf and the open ocean. Only 24 miles wide, the strait is "the only route to the open ocean for over one-sixth of global oil production and one-third of the world's liquified natural gas" (aljazeera.com, 7/11). For the main wing bosses, control over eastern Africa is critical to their control over Middle East oil, the capitalists' lifeblood.

But the domestic wing of the U.S. ruling class, represented by the Koch and Mercer families, Sheldon Adelson, and President Donald Trump, is less inclined to commit a big outlay of troops and tax dollars to keep its clamps on the region. Instead, these bosses are giving free rein to the rabid ruling thugs in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel to do their bidding.

As this split deepens, it will accelerate the bosses' move toward war and fascism. It will only hurt the working class. Only under an international communist movement, led by Progressive Labor Party, can workers end wars for profit and create a society to meet our needs.

An echo of Darfur

In the June massacre in Khartoum, Sudan's capital, "heavily armed troops burned tents, raped women and killed dozens of people, some dumped in the Nile"(New York Times, 6/15). This brutal paramilitary was following the leadership of the TMC's General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemeti. The murderers were carrying on the legacy of Darfur, the Sudan region where a genocidal civil war slaughtered hundreds of thousands and displaced millions between 2003 and 2008 (The Lancet, 1/30/10).

As one protester said, "For years Hemeti killed and burned in Darfur. Now Darfur has come to Khartoum" (NYT, 6/15). The militias had carried out massacres and atrocities in the Darfur region of Sudan in 2003. The U.S. bosses, who looked the other way under both George Bush and Barack Obama, also have Darfur blood on their hands.

Sudan: a notch in China's belt

As the U.S. bosses' infighting under Trump has created a global vacuum of power, the more unified rulers of China have filled the void. Given its location on a vital trade route between Asia, Europe, and Africa, Sudan is critical to the success of China's Belt and Road Initiative (formerly One Belt One Road). As the Chinese bosses take on U.S. imperialism and push to become the world's leading economic power, Port Sudan on the Red Sea will be an important notch on that belt. (Nearby Djibouti, which borders the Strait of Hormuz, houses China's first foreign military base).

The Chinese rulers' challenge has been a long time coming. In 1995, they signed an oil deal with Omar al-Bashir, the recently deposed Sudan president. China now controls 75 percent of Sudan's oil output of 133,000 barrels a day (thediplomat.com, 6/17). The ousting of al-Bashir in April by the TMC was a blow for China—and a potential opening for U.S. imperialists to reassert their influence.

Meanwhile, faced with a weakening U.S. and an aggressive Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are moving to align the Horn states with their axis against rival regional imperialists Iran, Qatar, and Turkey. After funding the ouster of the unreliable al-Bashir (Foreign Affairs, 7/19), they are now backing the ruling TMC with political and military support, as are Egypt and Eritrea. The prize is control over the Gulf of Aden and the Strait of Hormuz, which figure to play a prominent role in the coming battles leading up to World War III.

U.S. bosses' splits play out in Sudan

While both factions of the U.S. ruling class understand the importance of Sudan, they are split on how to manage that relationship. In 2017, after al-Bashir's dictatorship committed 7,000 troops to the U.S.-backed Saudi-Emirati coalition's genocidal war in Yemen, a campaign now opposed by the main wing, the Trump administration lifted economic sanctions and removed Sudan from the Muslim travel ban list (NYT, 7/18). Most recently, the Trump administration is considering "new ways to remove Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism" (reuters.com, 4/16) and has refrained from open criticism of TMC repression. This hands-off policy squares with the domestic wing's push to outsource the job of maintaining Middle East stability to its regional thugs-for-hire.

On the other hand, the main-wing finance capitalist coalitions—including the European Union, the United Nations, and the African Union—all support the "pro-democracy" FFC's "nonviolent civil disobedience" opposition. Their hope is for the U.S. to take the lead in extending the liberal world order's long-term influence over Sudan. This will be a rebuke to China and Russia, neither of which backed the UN's condemnation of the TMC junta: "U.S. leadership has been badly lacking…The [African Union] has an important role to play, but it needs an international ecosystem of support" (Council of Foreign Relations, 6/11).

Democracy for the bosses, dictatorship for the workers

The U.S. and EU bosses' media are hailing Sudan's power-sharing agreement as a step toward "democracy," the term they use for a dictatorship of the bosses. But history has shown that workers can never negotiate the terms of their freedom through our oppressors' democracy. When workers are duped into compromises with the capitalists, the consequences are always deadly. Workers in Sudan will be "sharing" power with the very forces responsible for the genocide and displacement of millions of our working-class brothers and sisters in Darfur and Yemen.

Workers in struggle today must rebuild a communist movement that will correct the errors of its predecessors. Otherwise, the brave struggle against Sudan's junta will be diverted into fighting for the interests of either U.S. or Chinese imperialism. Protesters must pick up the red flag where the old communists of Sudan left it, before making a wrong turn toward national independence. Join the communist movement with PLP! ✪

Trump and de Blasio agree: set killer kkkop free

NEW YORK CITY, JULY 24—When Eric Garner fought for his life five years ago, saying "I can't breathe" 11 times before dying in a chokehold captured on video, outrage at this racist cop murder exploded in an outpouring of militant multiracial demonstrations that shut cities down.

Eric Holder, Obama's do-nothing attorney general, refused to pursue a federal civil rights charge against Daniel Pantaleo, Garner's killer. This has now resulted in no punishment for this fiend. Meanwhile liberal mayor Bill de Blasio refuses to meet the Garner family's demand to fire Pantaleo.

Garner's mother, sister and others have called for eleven days of outrage in the wake of the federal decision, and Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members were there on the first day's rally. At points, marchers around us picked up PL-led chants like "If we don't get it, shut it down!" and kept them going through the crowd. "I can't breathe!" choked the streets of lower Manhattan, as hundreds demanded the imprisonment of Pantaleo.

PLP's presence and CHALLENGE was also felt at a gathering organized by the Garner family the Saturday before the federal no-indictment decision, which brought together mothers of 24 Black youth slain by the police. At this intergenerational event CHALLENGE was welcomed by Garner's mother and multiracial unity in the struggle for justice was emphasized by his sister.

NYPD rotten to the core

Each time one of these police is cleared of wrongdoing the political message is crystal clear—brutality and wanton murder is not an aberration or a mistake, but an essential function of policing in racist, capitalist United States. Pantaleo walks free. Of course, Pantaleo has a pattern of abuse: "Pantaleo was previously accused of false arrest and violating police procedures in two lawsuits, according to court records…In one lawsuit, two Black plaintiffs each won $15,000 after claiming they'd been falsely arrested in 2012 and forced to publicly strip for a search" (Vox, 7/14/2015). Similarly, Black NYPD cop "Bad Boy" Phillip Atkins who killed Shantel Davis caused over $200,000 in excessive force settlements to be paid out before he took her life.

Though a rash of high-profile racist police murders marked the tenure of Amerikkka's first Black president not a single cop was punished by Obama's so-called 'Justice' Department.

Violent nature of capitalism

Families like the Garner, Livingston, West, Davis and more fighting for justice over many years are positioned to see clearly a lesson the entire working class must absorb: elections do not change the basic violent, racist and anti-worker nature of capitalist state power.

It is up to PLP to organize these families and many millions more into a movement to smash that state power in a multiracial communist revolution that will forever abolish racist police murder.✪

Sinai workers fight to unionize; needs communism

CHICAGO, JULY 17 – Workers from Mount Sinai Hospital continue to sharpen the class struggle against their racist and sexist bosses. Today, a multiracial delegation of workers, including comrades from Progressive Labor Party (PLP), marched in the building to interrupt the hospital bosses' phony "town hall" meeting.

By taking the offensive and regularly engaging in bold direct actions, we are collectively deepening our understanding of our power as a united working class. Those of us in PLP are proud to be giving and receiving leadership from our class sisters and brothers in this struggle for an improved worker and patient environment.

With each step forward, we push the call for a communist society–one without racism, sexism, borders, exploitation or profits–as the only real solution to overcome the failures of capitalism and build the egalitarian world that we truly need and deserve.

Class struggle at Sinai

Mount Sinai is a community hospital in the mostly-Black North Lawndale neighborhood on the city's west side. It is a safety-net hospital, meaning that the majority of the patients served there are uninsured or underinsured workers and their families. The overwhelming majority of these patients are Black and Latin immigrant workers, and the staff is primarily Black, Latin, and Asian women.

The racist and sexist hospital bosses prioritize their money and profits over the well-being of the workers and patients. They routinely understaff departments in the name of "productivity" and neglect broken equipment and building repairs until the problems become too big to ignore. They regularly use intimidation and harassment against workers who speak up against them or make demands for better conditions.

But the hospital workers have not been taking these capitalist attacks lying down. In recent months, they have been engaging in direct actions against the bosses, many of which are organized through the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) healthcare local. These include marching on the bosses (see CHALLENGE 6/26) as well as holding a mass rally in front of the hospital on Juneteenth, tracing the racist legacy of capitalism from the era of chattel slavery to the present day.

The workers who are already formally recognized by the union, including nurse aides, dietary staff, and housekeepers just recently had their contract expire, and during recent negotiation sessions the bosses have only offered a pathetic 1.5 percent wage increase. On June 6th, the hospital nurses presented the bosses with a majority of signed cards stating that they too wanted to be official union members, a demand that was quickly shot down.

Learning of the nurses' desire to become unionized sent the bosses into panic mode. They quickly brought in union-busting consultants and launched a counter-campaign of misinformation and manipulation. They systematically pulled nurses into one-on-one meetings with managers. The new chief operating officer (COO), Airica Steed, has released a series of insincere letters, using identity politics and elitism to confuse and mislead nurses from uniting with other workers. They have hosted luncheons, a monthly system-wide town hall meeting, and even a ridiculous "transformation hotline" to try to convince workers that they suddenly care about the racist, sexist, and anti-worker conditions in the hospital.

Don't take a racist attack sitting down

But the working class is smart, and the majority of the workers see through their crap. We remain committed to the fight! So with this in mind, a PL comrade made the suggestion that for the town hall scheduled on this day, we sharpen the struggle by marching as a delegation to the event, delivering a petition of unity signed by hundreds of Sinai workers, and putting the bosses on the spot.

Over a dozen of us, multiracial women and men workers, entered the main hospital auditorium as the bosses babbled on near the front stage. A few corporate stooges and security tried to usher us into seats, but we collectively insisted on remaining together, facing the bosses in a show of defiance.

When the bosses paused to address the audience for questions, a comrade raised his hand and our group marched closer to the front of the stage. The comrade took the microphone, handed the COO the petitions and reinforced the demand that the bosses recognize the nurses as part of the union and that they stop disrespecting workers both on the job and at the negotiation table. Another comrade then took the microphone and sharply scolded the bosses, in front of over a hundred people, to end their campaign of wasting resources and dividing workers.

The bosses stuttered and quickly gave a meek response, barely addressing the statements made. We then marched out of the auditorium as a group, noting the smiles and raised thumbs given to us by our coworkers along the way.

Communist revolution must be the goal

As satisfying as this action was, we know as communists that the core of our struggle is to connect, bold, anti-racist fightback with revolutionary communist politics. Each time we push the limits with our fellow workers, we must be winning more of them to the reality that we need to ultimately run society after destroying capitalism by means of a mass international PLP.

We are making modest gains. More of our coworkers are getting CHALLENGE and some are coming to marches and study groups. We are ready for the next steps of this struggle, shoulder to shoulder with the working class!✪

A fight for licenses, drive towards fascism

TRENTON, NJ—When members and friends of Progressive Labor Party and Cosecha arrived at the state capitol building, about 100 people on the left side of the courtyard were holding signs in support of driving licenses for undocumented workers.

Two immigrant women workers denounced the fact that Democrats starting with Governor Phil Murphy are manipulating the votes of antiracist workers by promising this reform while campaigning, but refusing to hold an antiracist line while in office. The fight for licenses reveals a division between the oppressors and a danger of growing fascism. However, it also reveals opportunity to expose the bosses and build a movement without borders and pass laws: communism.

Driver license fight between two sets of fascists

In 2005, the federal government passed the Real ID Act, which imposed ironclad requirements for getting a driver's license (see below). Many undocumented immigrants then did not have the necessary documents to renew or get a new license. This then leads to the threat of deportation over simple traffic infractions by bringing the undocumented immigrants to ICE's attention. This June a law allowing undocumented immigrants to apply for driver's licenses passed the New York Assembly. In the meantime, workers in a couple of other states like New Jersey are being mobilized around similar reforms throughout the U.S. by mass organizations like Cosecha. The different attitudes towards immigrants by politicians represent fighting within the capitalist class. One set of bosses, represented by Donald Trump and his senior adviser Stephen Miller, are concerned about issues affecting their short-term profits. Their caging of children is exciting their mostly racist white working-class base.

On the other hand there is a set of liberal bosses that still worry about the U.S. being the main superpower in the world (see editorial, page 2). They know in order for that to happen they will need a much larger multiracial army. In order to do that they must convince Black and Latin workers that capitalism and these bosses care about them. The driver's license is one way of doing that.

The pass laws

Notably, in 2005 when the Bush administration signed into law the $82 billion military fund to slaughtering workers in Iraq and Afghanistan, they also incorporated what is known as the REAL ID Act. By 2020, all state identification cards will need to meet this standard to get on a domestic flight or federal facilities, including military bases. Not only do these identification cards enable a central way to track biodata of workers, it also differentiates which cardholder is a citizen, a "lawful" resident, or a "temporary" person with a corresponding symbol at the on the top right corner of the card. This system then effectively creates

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Puerto Rico: It's not just Ricky, it's capitalism

The following is a report from Puerto Rico, a site of mass protests.

SAN JUAN,JULY 22–We extend revolutionary greetings to our friends in the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) and to the struggling international working class. The working class in Puerto Rico engaged on a new level of struggle. Demonstrations rocked the country, with the number of workers protesting in record-breaking numbers; some estimates varying from 750,000 to a million. For the first time in the history of Puerto Rico workers, regardless of age, occupation, and political consciousness, banded together with so much fury to denounce the vile and corrupt Puerto Rican governor Ricardo Rosello, and the laundry list of abuses committed by his administration.

For the past twelve days and nights, workers took to the streets with militant fearlessness; thousands clashed violently with the tactical police force protecting our corrupt governor under the unifying slogan "Ricky resign."

While Rosello's administration has rightfully merited the collective anger and frustration of the Puerto Rican working class, the truth is that this fight should not limit itself to the ousting of this awful governor. Because it's not Rosello, it's capitalism. He is merely the representative of this degenerate, corrupt society, based on inequality, racism, sexism, and homophobia. Our true struggle should be a class struggle against the super-exploitation that colonialism and capitalism represent for workers.

Whether it's the corrupt local capitalists who serve U.S imperialist enterprises, or a government that is pro-Puerto Rican independence, it does not matter who is in power, as long as we live in a society based on exploitation that benefits the economic interests of the rich capitalists class.We will keep getting the same miserable results. We cannot just simply vote it away. Only a class struggle for communism and internationalism will guarantee the defeat of capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism.

Beyond these immediate demands, We should raise the level of consciousness of the working class. We must continue the struggle against rampant corruption that enriches a handful of friends of the elite that governs this country, the imposition of the PROMESA Law and the fiscal control board, the closure of schools in favor of charter schools and poor education, and for our fellow workers who died in Hurricane Maria (4,645).

We must continue to combat the racist neglect of Black workers, the sexist treatment of LGBTQ+ community, and the discrimination of elderly, obese, and migrant workers. We must continue to denounce the inadequate or almost nonexistent health care services, and fight hard against the governments cuts that led to the loss of pensions, against unemployment, and the so-called labor reform law, and against the repossession of homes leaving thousands homeless, for the thousands who had to leave the island, and for all the austerity measures imposed, known as neoliberal policies, that impoverish workers, and only serve to build up fascism.

In Puerto Rico, many are blinded by the illusions of living in a so-called democracy. However, the past consistently proves otherwise. In Puerto Rico elections were annulled by a board created in Washington and Wall Street to defend the interests of the bondholders above the interests of the working class of Puerto Rico. The liberal fascist President Obama created this commission.

Despite the lack of political consciousness, protestors did not rely on peaceful means to denounce this treacherous administration and its fundamental disregard for workers' lives. Protestors launched Molotov cocktails and other pyrotechnics, they halted the city and disrupted all business as usual. We cannot do as many workers tend to do, and deride these fighting methods without taking into account the historical past during the era of repression when people were criminalized and blacklisted by local police and FBI (cointelpro program). Their violence against this administration is justified, as this is the same administration that killed thousands during hurricane Maria, and joked about feeding cadavers of workers to the crows. (Vox, 7/22). So condemning the protestors' actions is to do the work of this murderous capitalist state that is the source of all the violence we face.

Dump Governor and fight for communism

While we applaud the courageous protestors and their militant fighting spirit, we must acknowledge that this isn't enough. Our struggle should not be reduced to the question of quantity, but it should be a question of quality. Despite militant appearance and the astounding numbers,of this struggle, the absence of class consciousness and revolutionary politics means that the energy of workers will be redirected towards the ballot. The result will inevitably mean that workers will be trapped in the capitalist swamp, and forced to choose between more Ricardo Rosellos or Donald Trumps. The unity of the working class is the only way to victory. Our message to the working class of Puerto Rico is the only solution to these problems in this capitalist and colonial society is communism. We ask them not to be misled by these political dead-ends that only call for the reforming of a murderous system.

Thus our task now is to take advantage of this new wave of the working-class fightback and organize working people to make them aware of the concepts of class struggle, elevate their consciousness to fight for the only force that can liberate the workers of Puerto Rico and around the world, communism. This struggle is only the beginning. Let's maintain strength, unity, and focus, and take care of each other. ¡In revolutionary spirit! ¡Que viva el Comunismo y el Internacionalismo! ¡La clase obrera no tiene fronteras!✪

2019 Summer Project: ‘Inspired to be a better communist’

The following letters are from the Summer Project in Texas organized about the Mexico-U.S. border and anti-immigrant racism (see CHALLENGE, 7/24).

This year marks the fifth summer project I attended, and it was by far the most sobering, transformative, and politically enriching one yet. I had both the misfortune and opportunity of being an eyewitness to the bosses’ monstrous border crisis, and the suffering they’ve inflictied on our working class brothers and sisters, when I volunteered at a migrant shelter. I was awestruck and inspired by the resilience of my fellow workers who made the incredibly dangerous and arduous journey from all corners of the continent, from Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, and Venezuela.

It was a crash course in becoming a better communist and developing leadership. I got to see the dangers of liberalism’s push for rainbow fascism up close and personal at a rally at Carrizo Springs. Selling CHALLENGE in Laredo, just steps away from the border, was a reminder of the importance of our work for CHALLENGE newspaper, not only a weapon against the bosses’ toxic ideology but as a tool for sharpening ourselves, as we struggle for the best political line that puts forth the truest reflection of the working class. The eagerness from workers to receive our message reaffirmed this, and helped me overcome my cynicism and further built my confidence in the working class.

Best of all, the time I spent with my comrades growing, singing, laughing, learning, and sharing our ideas and visions for a communist future These moments were glimmers of hope for me, and provided a much needed contrast to the tragedies I witnessed in Texas. This trip taught me that only workers armed with communist politics and values have the power to turn the dark nights we’re currently living in into brighter days. Long live communism!

★★★★★

I recently participated in the summer project and it has left me inspired to build the Party. We were hosted by comrades based in Texas. Their cohesion made me realize I ought to take greater advantage of my capacity to be bolder in my base-building. The impetus to build the Party also came as a result of impressions left from the various study groups and experiences in working collectively.

During our stay, we learned about the history of inter-imperialist rivalry that has led to the border crisis, as well as about locally relevant issues such as abusive labor practices and the socioeconomic effects of NAFTA. We also hosted a forum discussing how liberal fascism poses a greater threat to workers than blatant right wing racism. It was interesting to learn concrete information about how exactly liberal misleaders such as then-U.S.-president Obama and Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador have paved the way for anti-migrant policies. The necessity to build PLP is clear. If we don’t, the bosses and their minions will continue to exploit workers’ feelings of hopelessness and to redirect any sense of spirit towards dead ends such as electoral politics.

Exercises in working collectively demonstrated that we have progress to make, but successful application of Party principles is our greatest tool in resolving conflict and staying unified. Activities such as collectively cooking is one of the highlights of any summer project, as it is the taste of communism. Working collectively, however, can have its drawbacks since we are conditioned against it by this society.

In collectively producing a leaflet while on this trip, we ran into one such conflict, where a political criticism was raised, but in a non-productive way. Emotions ran high for all involved, but through diligent application of criticism/self-criticism we were able to reach a resolution. We learned more about how to struggle with each other. My main take-away was that I need to try to take greater leadership. Having witnessed a migrant shelter and having gained all this confidence in the line, it now feels more like a duty of pride, already filling me with excitement for next year’s May Day!

★★★★★

I am a high school student from Brooklyn. On the Summer Project, we focused on the undocumented immigrants crossing the border. The most impactful experience I had was going to volunteer at a resource center that gave undocumented immigrants a shelter and food until their buses came and took them to wherever their family or friends were in the United States. I speak only some Spanish, but still attempted to make conversation.

I met a father and his son coming from Honduras. The boy told me all about his interests in school and his admiration for making things from scratch. He took a bracelet that he made off of his wrist and put it onto mine. This was one of the most amazing and heartbreaking feelings I have ever experienced. It shows how dehumanized this 13-year-old boy was during the process of seeking asylum. It took only 15 minutes of a genuine interest in getting to know him for him to feel as though he owed something to me.

Seeing stories about how terribly these innocent people are treated is less impactful than just seen through a T.V or phone screen. When meeting them in person, you become so much more empathetic with them and more angry with the system for treating people so horribly. The Summer Project was so enlightening and I am so glad I went on it. It has motivated me to continue to fight for the international working class!

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PL’ers and comrades came from all parts, LA, Chicago, NY, NJ, and Puerto Rico to visit a migrant shelter to give aid to our fellow workers who made the perilous journey of crossing the border.

Our fellow workers made the journey from Honduras, Haiti, Venezuela, and even the Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite the brutish conditions our brothers and sisters had to face to cross the U.S border, they were still able to be resolute, along with smiles and playfulness. Comrades dove in to help families at the shelter with whatever was needed without hesitation. Handing out toiletries, a change of clothes, using their electronics to allow families to communicate with their loved ones, and the list could go on. The relief work provided by comrades was necessary, but we also clearly recognize that the conditions that the families endured, many refugees, and migrants all over the world is no accident. And that these same conditions will continue as long as the decrepit system of capitalism exists.

The liberal bosses narrow down the conversation of the border crisis as more “human treatment” of migrants coming into the U.S, but ultimately will have them become mindless cogs numb to super exploitation. The Republican wing of U.S bosses are overt in their racism, and sexism towards our fellow workers, but favor U.S companies reaping maximum profit and working us to bone abroad. We as communists, saw first hand, in the migrant shelters the direct effect of U.S imperialism, and the violence it imposes upon our class. Making us flee from homes, and leave all we know behind. But the working class will answer the bosses’ violence with revolutionary violence, smashing borders, sexism, racism, imperialism, and put an end to capitalism. Only a communist society can give peace and empowerment to the working class.

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While attempting to distribute food and water to immigrant workers in a Greyhound bus station, we were denied total access to awaiting passengers and were told to exit the premises immediately. A comrade stalled the manager of the station and its security guard while we modified our plans. Comrades less fluent in Spanish were accompanied by a stronger fluent Spanish speaker. We decided to give out food and leaflets with CHALLENGE. We effectively realized our plans and managed to talk to many people around the bus station.

A Black man that I had given literature to returned and began a healthy debate. We briefly discussed topics on racism, ethics, moral values, economics, incarceration and communism. He seemed insistent on talking with me on how successful Trump has been as a president. We debated about this for twenty minutes. He claimed he was not a Trump supporter. He said, “Mexicans don’t have the right to receive benefits when they move here.” He claimed, “hard work should be praised, not dependency.” He also stated that workers from other countries should feel happy that they could work at U.S. factories or businesses because they make more money than working for local institutions.

What I got from this interaction is that workers are willing to exchange ideas and debate solutions. He did not flinch when he learned that the leaflet and newspaper was communist. I was a bit surprised that he seemed comfortable talking with a communist like me. This goes to show that even our expectations may be on the side of error at times.

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As one of our comrades pointed out, there were posters saying “keep families together” and “stop the separation” but not enough posters saying shut the detention centers not end racist deportation. To make matters worse the center is placed near a racist Japanese internment camp. But none of the protesters mentioned this. Instead they wanted to sing This Little Light of Mine to “bring hope into the children’s hearts.” Hearing people older than me think this was a solution was nothing but disturbing.

But by the help of some rebel protesters screaming “WHY” and the PLP, we stopped the nonsense and turned the protest from standing around and holding hands to actually pointing out the problem: capitalism. The rally showed that even though most of the protesters were liberals, many of them agreed with the fact that this system isn’t working. We sang a pro-communist song called The Internationale. Almost all the protesters gathered and cheered and of many of them were following our chants.

Not even thirty minutes passed when guards began lining up, making sure we wouldn’t march to the gates. They began towing away the protesters’ cars. We were a small group. The fact that they needed to intimidate us with their force showed that they were scared. It showed me that we might have a long way to go before we start some real change, but we are not too far from it.

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LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Organize vs racism: potential of transit workers abound

On July 14, I attended an event commemorating Eric Garner five years after his choke hold murder by racist cop Daniel Pantaleo (see article, page 3). Gwen Carr, Eric's mother organized the event along with the mothers of other Black working-class youth killed by the police. Also attending was Elisha Carr, Eric's sister.

I had a conversation with Elisha who is a member of the transit worker's union. She told me that she had been involved in struggles against racist murders before her brother's death. She cited the Michael Griffith case in particular. I spoke about the killing of James (Quarters) Parrish by a cop 50 years ago when I first moved to Brooklyn.

I asked what if anything her union had done to seek justice for Eric since she and her mother were members of the transit union. Elisha indicated that little had been done.

I told her how I and a group of 40 of my coworkers had called our union (SSEU Local 371) headquarters to demand that the local get involved in the protests after Amadou Diallo was murdered by the police. We were able to spark the participation of hundreds of our local's members in that case and others that followed. After I retired, I did a similar thing to get my retiree organization to support the family of Kyam Livingston. Elisha and other fighters could do the same in her union. I wondered what would happen if transit workers and other city workers stopped work to protest racist police murders. Certainly it would be a powerful action.

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How to respond to the refugee crisis en mass

Progressive Labor Party calls for its members to organize wherever they are against this refugee crisis. Our PLP group in Brooklyn did that and would like to share our findings, lessons, and suggestions. Mainly we found that wherever we can involve masses of people in organizing antiracist actions, it opens the door to having antiracist and pro-communist analysis of the world. That way, we can expand our sphere of influence.

Last winter, we sent a PL'er across the border with various mass organizations to aid the refugees in their asylum applications and won a number of unions to help support the project. The refugee crisis was raised in numerous union meetings on the East Coast and locals representing more than 40,000 workers agreed to support the effort. These included Legal Aid and Legal Service workers who represent thousands of immigrant families in court and have led walkouts demanding that ICE agents be barred from the NY State Courts.

We are working in a faith-based immigrant-rights organization and coordinating that work, through our Party club, with our work in a union. Out of the Winter Project, we started a study group of 15 people. This includes PLP members, regular readers of CHALLENGE, and others who are active in, and committed to fighting anti-immigrant racism. Five have been to the border. We discuss current and historic readings on borders issues, raise aspects of our communist line, and also discuss what activities and struggles are taking place.

Some of us are reaching out to other unions to try to develop contingency plans in case of mass roundups of immigrants already here, and we are getting a very good response. New York City has 3.3 million foreign-born immigrants, from more than 150 countries, who make up 46 percent of the city's workforce (Comptroller Report, 1/11/17).

The PLP Border Summer Project can help launch a Party-wide effort to join the growing fight to close the camps, fight deportations and demand amnesty for all. We are small and the struggle often seems overwhelming. While we cannot now lead the mass movement around immigration, we can lead a campaign where we work, live and go to school, with all of our members playing a role.

One study group participant feels that our coworkers do not see the connections between themselves and the immigration crisis. "Black workers are fighting for their lives and white workers feel threatened." The question is, how can we address these issues and help others to understand? A mass party can only come from the mass movement.

We can learn from the Wayfair workers in Boston, mostly white workers who organized a walkout against the camps when they learned their company had sold $200,000 worth of beds to ICE and private border prisons. We can develop plans in our workplaces and other mass organizations on how to react when a roundup is underway. We can build the consciousness that workers collectively have the power to change the world.

Millions of people are disgusted by the current border crisis and the threats against immigrant families. This is already a mass issue and we are late to the game. Having these types of struggles in our areas of concentration can open the door to discussions about the need for communist revolution and help build PLP.

Imperialist exploitation created border crisis

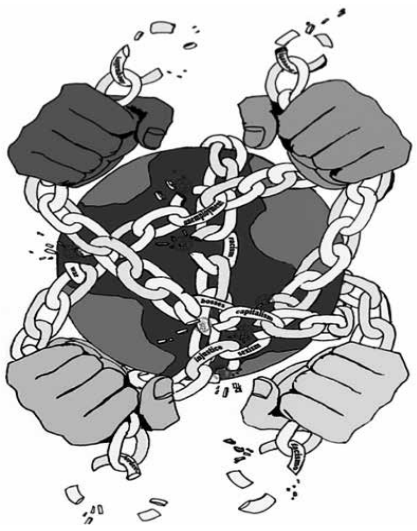
The following is a speech given during the Progressive Labor Party's (PLP) Summer Project at the border.

Capitalism is a system that tries to prevent us, workers and students, from living fulfilling lives. Imperialism is a stage of capitalism, a system under which the capitalists move their money and power all over the world in order to control more of it. Imperialism, and particularly U.S. imperialism, has proven many times over that it cannot and will not provide for decent lives for the international working class. Racism, sexism, wars for profit, theft of the value of our labor, destroying the environment, and national borders—all are the product of capitalism.

I'm from Puerto Rico and I can speak of the many ways capitalism ruins our lives. The island has been a colony of the U.S. since 1898. The colonial economy has produced, among many other terrible things, an overall debt of some $74 billion, approximately $40,000 for every single Puerto Rican: child, retiree, worker and maybe even dead folks.

We are presently confronting a sharpening crisis on the U.S.-Mexico border that has trapped workers escaping imperialist-created misery primarily in Central America. The conditions that are forcing workers and their families to flee right now date back to colonial times, when these countries were colonies of Spain. The current U.S.-Mexico border crisis reflects conditions for the working class throughout the hemisphere, and beyond, as workers from the Middle East and Africa migrate to Europe to escape war and poverty. There are currently an estimated 244 million international migrants (3.3 percent of the world population, iom.int/wmr/2018).

As communists, we do not recognize capitalist-created borders! We say: "Workers of the World, Unite! Smash All Borders!" Communist education teaches us to understand our reality as members of class society. We currently live under the capitalist profit system. And the capitalist rulers have created colonies in many parts of the world, where they extract super-profits.



The workers in all colonies are coerced militarily, they are displaced by war, their traditional means of earning a living are destroyed. When they can no longer tolerate these conditions, they are forced to migrate. This is what is happening now in Central America. But let's be clear about this. Most of us would overwhelmingly prefer to stay in our countries of origin. But because of imperialism we end up elsewhere.

The ruling class bears all responsibility for these conditions because of its drive for profits. This is capitalism's reason for existence. It is invasive, oppressive and provides only the absolute minimum for the working class to live on, while the bosses and their lackeys grow rich.

Imperialists penetrate borders at will

The imperialists have ignored—or created—national borders when it serves their own class interests. The U.S. has a long and bloody history of penetrating the borders of other countries in the hemisphere to support its claim for hegemony in the region.

Guatemala: The U.S. CIA backed a coup in 1954 against elected president Jacobo Arbenz in order to support the interests of the U.S. owned United Fruit Company. In the ensuing 36-year civil war, thousands of workers and their families were massacred by the U.S. trained and equipped fascist military.

Honduras: The U.S. crossed the border in 1890, to enable U.S. fruit companies as they turned the country into one large banana plantation. By 1914, they had acquired one million acres of the best agricultural land, carrying profits back to U.S. banks, and turning Honduran peasants into landless rural workers. The U.S. later dominated banking and mining sectors. In the 1980s, Honduras became the U.S.'s military base to train and arm the right-wing Contra forces to counter the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

Mexico: The U.S has disputed Mexico's sovereignty since colonial times. Later, in 1910, it intervened in Mexico's affairs to prop up dictator Porfirio Diaz for 31 years. It supported the creation of death squads that killed some 3,000 communists and tortured another 7,000 during this period. These interventions resulted in the drastic reduction in wages and impoverishment of the working class in Mexico. Another byproduct of U.S. intervention is the flowering of the maquiladoras factories that produce textiles and electronics while paying Mexican workers starvation wages. Another cross-border activity is the U.S. oil companies' partnering with Mexican drug cartels to steal tens of millions of dollars in oil from government pipelines.

Clearly, when the interests of the imperialists are at stake, borders mean nothing. It's only when their actions force workers to try to cross those very same borders to save their own lives that national borders become sacred!

To close, I would like to quote a piece of writing I found in CHALLENGE newspaper. It summarizes what we must do. "To liberate ourselves, an ember of class unity must be fanned into the flame of class consciousness."

A fight for licenses, drive towards fascism

Continued from page 4

two classes of identification systems—one for documented and one undocumented workers. This demonstrates how the liberal bosses are building a wider base for fascism.

CHALLENGE, a tool for class-consciousness

CHALLENGE continues to make a difference with more than 30 workers taking these revolutionary working-class ideas into their hands. Communist ideas continue to have a growing impact among workers, as one person at Cosecha acknowledges that reading passages from CHALLENGE helped her realize that the fight of workers extends far beyond this reform organization.

After the speeches, our Cosecha group moved into the statehouse. Once past the checkpoint, we went downstairs and chanted in the hallways through which politicians were walking back and forth to their meetings. Though security pushed us into to a confined area, but we were still able to make our presence known to the politicians when they were in our sights. Chants included, "Licenses Yes, Promises No!" as we gave the politicians pamphlets. Some faked being supportive and others didn't care and kept moving through the crowd.

Which side are the politicians on?

Then, we moved upstairs into the chamber where the politicians vote. In the hallway leading to the chamber were paintings of rich white capitalist politicians throughout history. Their portraits amplified the oppression we already felt. While in the chambers, two protesters defiantly

revealed a banner in support of the driving licenses. Some workers revealed posters, and still other workers began to chant against the politicians. Soon after, the workers were kicked out. This revealed the true colors of the politicians.When asked what lessons she could share with other workers who read CHALLENGE, an immigrant leader on the front lines of the reform shared the following:

> *Bosses and politicians have a lot in common. Politicians pretend to advocate for our rights, which ultimately they only grant when it serves their interests. Both use similar tactics to dominate us. While we labor without fighting back, okay with the little that they give us, the bosses will keep treating us the same. We must realize bosses need us. If we all refuse to work for them, they will be forced to see they need us. When the working class rises up the politicians lose control. They get upset because they are losing domination over us. This is the same with bosses. Learning that fear is the only thing that prevents us from fighting back is important. I have realized that I have the strength to struggle with other workers to fight back. That is how all struggle starts. With knowing that fear has not allowed us to fight back, and having the courage to take leadership in inspiring other workers to rise up against all of our suffering.*

Communists in PLP agree. The suffering we feel from bosses is what we call exploitation. The system that maintains this unequal relationship between bosses and workers is capitalism. Regardless of the reforms promoted by one politician or another under this capitalist system, any reform can and is reversed or turned against workers when the conflicts between bosses intensify.

You don't need a license to join PLP

Communist politics on the other hand means learning from and giving leadership to workers wherever PLP has a presence. We fight to transform any limited reform for a small section of workers into an international working class revolution. This is done by exposing how the competition and division among bosses constantly undermines any benefits gained through reform, drives bosses to find new ways to divide workers, and creates the conditions for workers to unite internationally against our common exploiters. This is what we call organizing for communist revolution! Join the fight!✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from the capitalist press that may be of use for our readers.
NYT=New York Times
GW= Guardian Weekly

The latest Jim Crow: E-incarceration

NYT, 7/3 — Daehaun White had no previous convictions. But the $1,500…bond was far beyond what he…could afford….A non-profit fund… paid it for him…However, he realized there was a catch….The judge…had ordered him to wear an ankle monitor that would track his location at every moment using GPS [and]…was required to pay $10 a day to a private company,…Emass…. and pay $300 upfront…to cover the first 25 days, plus a $50 installation fee….

In northern St. Louis County, where as a result of Jim Crow redlining, most of the area's black population lives…and[where] Michael Brown was shot and killed by a police officer. Over the past half-century, the number of people behind bars in the United States jumped by more than 500 percent, to 2.2 million….More than 125,000 people… were supervised with monitors in 2015….[and] this number continues to rise [and] was signed into law by President Trump with support from the private prison giants GEO Group and CoreCivic….

…It costs St. Louis roughly $90 a day to detain a person….In 2017 the average stay was 291 days. When individuals pay Emass $10 a day for their own supervision, it costs the city nothing….Nationwide on any given day, half a million people sit in crowded and expensive jails…because they cannot purchase their own freedom….Defendants who have not been convicted of a crime are put on…payment plans for monitors that sometimes cost more than their bail. And unlike bail, they don't get the payment back, even if they're found innocent…."replacing an unjust cash-bail system with one just as unfair, inhumane and unnecessary…."

…In California…juveniles awaiting trial or on probation face…more than 50 restrictions, including not participating "in any social activities…." Far from an… alternative to incarceration, it ends up sweeping more people into the system….

White…could…not bathe or swim (the monitor is…not waterproof). Interfering with the monitor's functioning was a felony….In 2011…[of] 5,000 people on electronic monitors…22 percent…has been fired or asked to leave a job because of the device….Nearly everyone…who wore a monitor described feeling trapped, as though they were serving a sentence before they had even gone to trial….Mass supervision, like mass incarceration, disproportionately affects black people…Surveillance technologies like GPS [link] to America's long history of controlling where black people live, move and work…. In [Simone Browne's] …2015 book, "Dark Matters," she [states] "surveillance is nothing new to black folks," from the branding of enslaved people [to] the shackling of convict laborers to Jim Crow segregation….

Just like Ferguson: Youth rebel vs killer kkkops in Israel

NYT, 7/4 — Ethiopian-Israelis…took to the streets across the country…for a third day of protests in an outpouring of rage after an off-duty police officer shot a black youth….

The mostly young demonstrators have blocked major roads and junctions, paralyzing traffic during the evening rush hour, with disturbances extending into the night, protesting…deeply ingrained racism and discrimination in Israeli society. Scores have been injured – among them many police…and dozens of protestors have been detained….[Protesters] threw stones and firebombs at the police and overturned and set fire to cars in chaotic scenes.…The police fired stun grenades, tear gas and hard sponge bullets and sent in officers on horseback, prompting demonstrators to accuse them of the kind of police brutality that they had turned out to protest in the first place.

…Solomon Tekah 18, arrived from Ethiopia with his family seven years ago….He was with friends in…Haifa, outside a youth center….Mr. Tekah's friends said that they were just trying to get away after the officer began harassing them….The bullet…hit him in the chest, killing him….

Eval Gato, 33, an Ethiopian activist….compared their situation to African-Americans in Chicago or Ferguson, MO….Since 1997, he said a dozen young Ethiopian-Israelis have died in encounters with the police.

U.S. economy: "Good times not so good," except for CEOs

NYT, 7/3 (editorial) — These good times don't feel particularly good. Economic growth over the past decade has been slow and fragile, and most of the benefits have been claimed by a small minority of the population….Truck drivers still earned, on average, slightly less in 2018 than in 2009…. Executive compensation, by contrast, went up, up and away. Chief executives of…most of the nation's largest corporations made an average of $14.5 million in 2018, increasing by $5.2 million in the past decade…The least affluent 70 percent of American households had less wealth at the end of 2018 than at the beginning of 2007….The big gains were heavily concentrated at the very top, in the hands of a small proportion of extraordinarily wealthy families…

WWII

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact: lies and truth

August 23 marks the 80th anniversary of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (also known as the Hitler-Stalin Pact) between the then-socialist Soviet Union and Hitler's Nazi Germany, on the eve of World War II. This was a non-aggression treaty, not an alliance, as the anti-communist capitalist historians want us to believe. The Soviets needed to buy time to build up their military and industrial capabilities before they could take on the German fascists. Not only did the Soviet Red Army take on the Nazis, they smashed them, driving them all the way back to Berlin. 80 percent of German casualties in World War II were at the hands of the Soviet forces. But this victory came at a political cost as the communists promoted the nationalist idea of "defending the motherland" instead of inspiring and organizing workers everywhere to rise up against the Nazis and all capitalists.

Pre-World War II period

The capitalist bosses lie about this treaty because it exposes their own loyalty to fascism.During the 1930s, Britain, France, and the U.S., desperate to crush the first workers' state that they had failed to do in their onslaught after the Bolshevik Revolution, encouraged Hitler to move East to attack the Soviet Union. They allowed him to take back the Rhineland, a region of Germany that had been occupied by the U.S., France, Belgium and Britain as a result of Germany's defeat in World War I; to build up Germany's military in violation of the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I; and to incorporate Austria as part of Germany. In the 1938 "Munich Agreement," the British and French gave Germany more of what it wanted, the most industrialized part of Czechoslovakia, in a brazen attempt to aim the Nazis toward the Soviet Union and hold off war in Western Europe.

In 1939, the Soviets tried to get Britain, France, and Poland to agree to a mutual defense treaty against Hitler. Britain was reluctant; its negotiators were sent to Moscow on a slow boat, instructed to drag out the talks, and given no authorization to sign anything. The French also did nothing. The Soviets got the message – the Allies wanted Hitler to smash the USSR, headquarters of the world communist movement that the capitalists of the world hated far more than they hated Hitler.

All the while, the USSR was at war with Japan, which had attacked it from Mongolia at Khalkhin Gol in May 1939. This was clearly a Japanese probe to test the strength of the Soviet Far Eastern Army. Without a temporary treaty with Germany, the USSR might have faced two wars at the same time. But by early September 1939, Japanese forces were defeated.

Meanwhile, Hitler wanted to conquer Poland without worrying about the Soviet Red Army. He rightly guessed that Britain and France would not fight.On August 23, 1939, the USSR and Germany signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. On August 25, Britain signed a treaty with Poland promising to go to war if Germany attacked it (France and Poland later signed a similar agreement).

World War II begins

On September 1, 1939, Hitler's armies attacked Poland. On September 3, Britain and France declared war on Germany. From September 1939 to May 1940, the "Phony War" took place with no large-scale military land operations. The Western capitalists were signaling Hitler that they still wanted him to "move eastward" against the Soviets

Communist led workers defeated the Nazis

Tactically, the Pact was of some help in defeating Hitler. It temporarily kept Hitler's armies 300 miles from the Soviet border. When the war started in September, Leningrad and Moscow, two centers of Soviet industry and political strength, were that much further from the Nazi armies. But it was the heroic workers of Leningrad, Moscow, Stalingrad and throughout the USSR that defeated the Nazis. Just think of what an inspired and organized working class throughout Europe and the world could have accomplished.

The treacherous Western Allies were hoping that Hitler would conquer the Soviet Union defeating the world's first workers state. Today they rewrite history saying the Soviets invaded Poland after dividing it up with the Germans. Not true. The Germans invaded, the fascist Polish army provided little resistance, and the Polish government fled to Rumania. Quickly the Germans declared that the Polish government was no longer in control of the country and therefore the Polish state no longer existed. That meant that the secret "sphere of influence" clause in the Pact was no longer valid. Hitler ordered the German army to help form a fascist Ukrainian state in former Eastern Poland. The Soviets sent in the Red Army to keep the Nazi army away from their border by occupying those parts of Poland that had been seized from Soviet Russia by imperialist Poland in 1921.

Everyone – Soviets, Germans, and the Western powers – assumed that the Polish government would make peace with Hitler and then form a buffer state that, no matter how anti-Soviet, would also be anti-German. But the Polish government did not form a so-called government-in-exile. "Their own" ruling class abandoned the Polish working class to Hitler's Nazis, who proceeded to murder several million of them.

Reject nationalism, fight for communism!

It is in the interest of workers around the world to get to the truth behind historical events. Our working class worldview allows us to develop our revolutionary communist ideas. We can't depend on the rulers to do this for us, as they do in our schools, because their "truth" is always based on their class interest, and therefore lies. When the working class controls all aspects of society, then we will tell the class history of humanity.

From the standpoint of the USSR, the treaty was a delaying tactic, as the Soviets prepared for the German attack. Progressive Labor Party criticizes this treaty as the Soviets succumbing to nationalism and prioritizing the "defense of the motherland" instead of building the international communist movement. In spite of their weaknesses the Soviet communists, with a monumentally heroic effort, defeated the Nazis. We must learn from their strengths and weaknesses as the imperialist powers once again are headed toward world war. Say no to nationalism. Workers of the world unite! Fight for communism!

Further Reading: Pages of articles and evidence at tinyurl.com/furr-mlg09 ; Grover Furr, Blood Lies (2014), Chapters 7-8.

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